



School District 84 - School Growth Plan

School Context:

Gold River Secondary School (GRSS) is a small rural school serving the village of Gold River as well as the Mowachaht-Muchalaht community of Tsaxana. It is located on the unceded territory of the Mowachaht-Muchalaht in the village of Gold River. GRSS enrolls approximately 84 students in grades 8 to 12, of whom about 60% identify as Indigenous. Currently, there is one international student registered in the grad program, with generally about 10 or more present at a given time whose stays last anywhere from 3-6 months. There is a disproportionate and diverse number of learning needs present amongst the students at GRSS, with about 40% of the local students having an IEP. Attendance has historically been a persistent issue at GRSS, and this has only been exacerbated post-pandemic.

The staff of GRSS consists of a teaching principal and vice principal, five full-time classroom teachers, one 0.5 classroom teacher, a full time LART, 3 special needs educational assistants as well as a Nuuchahnulth cultural support worker. A diverse array of delivery models is needed to serve our students such as structured classroom, blended, distance and small group.

In terms of identity, Gold River is strongly bifurcated between its Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. The former are the Mowachaht-Muchalaht, who have occupied Gold River and the territory around it for thousands of years. The latter are strongly rooted in the forestry industry, which was the economic lifeblood of the community during its creation and heyday from the mid 60s until the late 90s. With the closing of the mill in 1998, the community of Gold River began to decrease in size, kicking off a period of economic decline, which has continued into the present day. The Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities interact at times but remain very distinct. This divide is reflected in the social structures of the students in the school community.

With forestry seemingly transitioning out, the question of what will define Gold River, going forward, has yet to be fully answered. The Mowachaht-Muchalaht has come under new management in recent years, and this is leading to development in infrastructure, new employment, economic development, and tourism.

Community has expressed that one of its primary wishes from the school is that graduating students are ready or on a pathway to be able to step in to local community roles and employment opportunities.

What is happening for our learners?

Attendance Data

From monthly attendance reports, students in the *Excellent* attendance range (missing under 1 day per month) went from 27% in September and topped out at 54% in March 2026. The average number of students in this category during the 8 months of the school year so far has been 45%. There is a core group of students, roughly 19%, in the *At Risk* category (missing between 1 and 2 days per month), and 16% in the *Chronic* category (missing between 2 and 4 days per month). However, 21% of our student population in the *Severe* category and is missing more than 4 days per month. These numbers have remained stable throughout the year despite interventions and incentives. Talking with students and families, over the year, suggests there is no single cause uniting everyone in the *Chronic* and *Severe* attendance categories. Some students have family responsibilities like childcare, fishing, housework, and culture that regularly pull them out of school. Others have a sleep schedule that is out of sync with the hours during which school is open. Substance abuse is often a factor.

Many students and their families report mental health strain (anxiety, financial, overwhelmed with life) that makes being at school difficult. Some students report that the classwork is too easy for them, and they would rather work more independently. Some students struggle with belonging, but they are not generally the ones with attendance issues.

Diverse Needs and Delivery Models

We have found that many of our students respond well to alternate delivery models that are flexible in terms of time, place and mode of delivery. Blended, distance, small group, independent, and online approaches are examples. GRSS Student Surveys along with the Pathways Interviews from last year indicate that students, as a rule, feel safe and welcome at the school. GRSS needs a staff ready to pivot and support the needs of our students whatever they may be when they come to us. Some headway has been made this year in the development of various delivery models—with our SALT (Supervised Alternative Learning Team) program as well as with the development of various support spaces throughout the school. However, more work is needed in terms of refining and fine tuning.

Divided Community

In pathways interviews, roughly half of the students enjoy participating in and learning about Nuu-chah-nulth culture and recognize the importance of it being reflected in the school, while the other half is either indifferent or actively disinterested in having anything to do with it.

Literacy Data

The primary reference point this year has been the District Wide Write, particularly students in the *Emerging* and *Developing* range. Students in the *Emerging* range are beginning to learn a skill but need targeted support and practice. Students in the *Developing* range are able to repeat a skill with occasional support. Targeted interventions for students in grades 8 to 10 have been in the form of literacy support groups. On the average, there was a decrease of about 42% across our entire student population of students in the *Emerging* and *Developing* range. The greatest improvement was seen in grades 8 & 10, with little to no improvement in the grade 9 group. The grade 9 group, due to staffing challenges, received the most inconsistent support.

Community & Staff Feedback

With respect to the community feedback, a common theme became apparent. The community wanted to see students ready for the workplace or post-secondary studies after high-school.

With respect to staff feedback, there was definite wish to further expand and refine alternative delivery structures in addition to preparing students for transitioning into the workplace, trades or post-secondary studies. The development of work experience programming was area targeted for further development.

Annual Goal Summary

School Goals	SD84 Strategic Priority	Relevant SD84 Strategic Plan Goal
Every student will engage with a meaningful pathway towards graduation that reflects their personal needs and goals while fostering respect, responsibility and accountability.	Learning	Every student graduates well-equipped to meet their personal goals.
By June 2027, students will strengthen their ability to care for their social, emotional, and mental well-being by embedding social-emotional learning (SEL) into classroom practice.	Relationships	Strong partnerships develop with parents, caregivers, and communities.
Increase the number staff and students who are comfortable with, engaged with and learning about Nuuchah-nulth culture.	Indigenous Ways of Knowing	Developing strong connections between schools and local communities.

Learning Goal

Goal Statement:

Every student will engage with a meaningful pathway towards graduation that reflects their personal needs and goals while fostering respect, responsibility and accountability.

Priority Alignment**Supporting Strategic Plan Goal:****Learning**

Every student graduates well-equipped to meet their personal goals.

Why was this goal chosen?

About 40% of our students have an Individual Education Plan and about 37% of students have chronic-severe attendance (missing 2 or more days per month) with a majority of their attendance being skewed towards the afternoon and on inconsistent days. Further, there is a percentage of students, for a variety of reasons, that struggle to engage with a learning program, even when they are present.

While graduation rates have been steady or improving in recent years, feedback from community consultations suggest that students are not always graduating well equipped to articulate or advance along their chosen life path.

This goal was chosen to address the diverse learning needs of the students and to ensure that every student is supported in reaching graduation through learning experiences that are relevant, engaging, and connected to their individual strengths, interests, culture, and future aspirations. It reflects the school's commitment to equity and inclusion by recognizing that students learn in different ways and require different supports and opportunities to succeed.

Feedback surveys to parents, staff, and students highly supported (~70%) the District *Strategic Plan*. As well, the GRSS PAC strongly supported this learning goal as well as the other two goals listed in this document.

Lastly, this goal also emphasizes the development of important personal and social competencies such as respect, responsibility, and accountability, which help students become active, resilient, and contributing members of their school and community. By focusing on meaningful pathways, the school aims to increase student engagement, improve attendance and achievement, strengthen student well-being, and better prepare students for future education, employment, and life beyond graduation.

Strategies to implement

- Strengthen literacy supports through targeted and tiered interventions, including scheduled literacy support blocks three times per week.
- Expand and refine diverse learning delivery models, including classroom instruction, blended learning, distance learning through SD#84 Brightspace, drop-in support opportunities, supervised alternative learning blocks, and after-school tutorial sessions.
- Provide flexible and individualized academic supports that respond to varying student learning needs, interests, and graduation pathways.
- Develop an all-purpose student support space where students can regulate emotions, work independently, access support, or take a break in a safe and welcoming environment.
- Increase opportunities for student voice, self-reflection, and ownership of learning through regular goal-setting activities and core competency self-assessments, which are conducted at least three times per year.
- Monitor student progress regularly using attendance, achievement, engagement, graduation progress, and student feedback to guide interventions and supports.
- Support students in developing respect, responsibility, and accountability through restorative practices, relationship-building, and consistent expectations across the school community.
- Continue to provide and promote athletics, clubs, cultural opportunities, leadership activities, and extracurricular programs that engage a broad cross-section of students and strengthen school connectedness.
- Strengthen communication and collaboration between school staff, families, community partners, and support services to ensure students receive coordinated and meaningful supports.

Measures of Success

Some of measures we will be using to track this goal include the following:

- Improvements in literacy data, more specifically in transitioning out of the not yet and minimally meeting category (*Emerging* and *Developing*) to fully meeting grade level expectations (*Proficient*) on the IRA, district-wide write, and graduation literacy assessments.
- Anecdotal feed-back from teachers and staff at school-based team meetings, and targeted learning conversations around progress and needs of students.
- Improvement in attendance data with less students in the *Severe* category.
- Students can articulate goals and a sense of direction, more so in higher grades.
- Hallway tracking data will be used to see if the number of students, who are present at school but disengaged, has decreased. SALT sign-sheets will provide data to see if students are taking advantage of support spaces and alternate delivery models.
- Sustained or improved graduation rates and successful transition to post-secondary pathways, be they university, trades or employment.
- Increased participation in extra-curricular activities like spirit committee, basketball, volleyball and track.

Resources Required

Staff will be assigned to support spaces and to support blocks. SBTs involving staff will track student needs and assign various supports when needed. If possible, some staff FTE will be assigned to a work experience program.

There is a need for new furniture. Specifically, tables that will allow multiple students to sit and receive support at the same time, and will also fit in the spaces we are using. As well, tech resources will need restocking; new Chromebooks, headphones, and speakers will be needed. In addition:

- Mentorship opportunities with community members, elders and local organizations.
- Assign prep blocks for teachers simultaneously to give opportunities for collaboration, planning and support meetings.
- Diverse course offerings, electives, and experiential learning opportunities.
- Indigenous-focused learning materials and cultural programming.
- Opportunities for land-based learning.
- Regular, consistent and reliable communication channels with families, caregivers and community.

Relationship Goal

Goal Statement:

By June 2027, students will strengthen their ability to care for their social, emotional, and mental well-being by embedding social-emotional learning (SEL) into classroom practice.

Priority Alignment**Supporting Strategic Plan Goal:****Relationships**

Strong partnerships develop with parents, caregivers, and communities.

Why was this goal chosen?

This goal was chosen to help students build stronger connections to their school, families, cultures, and communities while recognizing the important role they play within them. By developing stronger partnerships, students are provided with more opportunities to explore their interests, strengths, and future pathways in meaningful and relevant ways. Feedback from parent and community surveys indicated a concern over that lack of connectedness with today's youth.

Some specific factors behind our selection of this goal:

- Pathways interviews indicate that a majority of our students do not have a broad, clear and consistent conception of how they can contribute to their community and a significant number are unsure what is implied by the term community.
- Unlike past eras by the time a cohort of students reaches grade 12 a large number of our students have arrived in Gold River late in middle school or in high school. Further there has been a diminishment of unifying community factors like hockey, skating and other activities. All of this has resulted in a large number of our families not knowing or being familiar with one another. This fact stands out when we work with parents and families to organize activities connected with grad.
- Lastly, Gold River is in the middle of a transition from its identity primarily as a forestry town something else. It is of fundamental importance that the students of Gold River Secondary are involved at the ground level of this transition.

The goal reflects the belief that learning extends beyond the classroom and that students are more engaged and successful when they feel supported by a connected network of relationships. Strengthening these partnerships helps students see a wider range of possibilities for themselves, including leadership opportunities, cultural connections, career exploration, volunteer experiences, and community involvement.

This goal also supports student well-being, belonging, and identity development by creating opportunities for students to contribute positively to their communities and recognize their value and potential. Through increased collaboration between school, families, caregivers, and community partners, students are better supported in becoming respectful, responsible, and engaged citizens who are prepared for life beyond graduation.

Strategies to implement

- Strengthen regular communication between school, families, and caregivers through newsletters, digital platforms, phone calls, and community updates that highlight student learning and opportunities for involvement.
- Increase access to safe spaces and trusted adults for students to seek support.
- Create structured opportunities for family and community engagement such as open houses, student-led conferences, cultural events, and celebration nights that showcase student learning and achievements.
- Develop partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and community groups to provide students with mentorships, job shadowing, work experience, and land based outdoor learning opportunities.
- Integrate Elders, knowledge keepers, and community members into classroom learning to support cultural learning and identity development.
- Expand student leadership and volunteer opportunities within the school and broader community to help students build confidence, responsibility, and connection. Embed circle structures into school routines.
- Provide regular opportunities for students to engage in service-learning projects that connect classroom learning to real community needs and issues.
- Create "community connection" events or days like a local career fair or a mental health fair, where students can explore local services, programs, and career pathways available to them.
- Develop transition supports (school-to-work, school-to-post-secondary) that involve families and community partners.
- Celebrate and share student success stories within the community to strengthen pride, visibility, and connection between youth and their wider community.

Measures of Success

Some of the measures used to track this goal will include a combination of student voice, participation data, and community engagement evidence, including:

- Student Feedback surveys done in September and January. The hope is to see a stronger sense of belonging, connection, and understanding of their role within the school and community.
- Pathway Interviews will be another survey source, specifically the section regarding connections to community
- Continued focus on the Core Competencies (Communication, Thinking, and Personal & Social) through dedicated teaching blocks, Self-Assessments, and group activities. This should be done at the start and end of a trimester to see if there has been any improvement.
- Using the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) goal framework to model goal setting in addition to teaching the process for reassessing goals. This should formally be done at the start and end of a trimester to see if the goal has been met or redefined.
- Increased student participation in community-based activities, leadership opportunities, cultural events, clubs, volunteering, work experience, or mentorship programs.
- Increased family and caregiver participation in school events, conferences, celebrations, and learning opportunities.
- The development of partnerships with local organizations, elders, businesses, and community members
- Career Life Education and Career Life Connections courses will provide the framework for the creation of student portfolios that will demonstrate awareness of personal strengths, interest, and future pathways.
- Improved attendance and graduation completion data.
- Family and Community Feedback surveys done yearly. This will provide evidence indicating whether or not stronger relationships and communication between the school and families, caregivers, students, and community partners has occurred.
- Conducting surveys with recent graduates to see what pathways they have chosen. Is there an increased percentage of students, who do not go to university, with more concrete local pathways?

Resources Required

Building the professional capacity of staff will be a key factor in meeting this goal, thus training, in targeted areas, will be necessary for all staff members. Nuu-chalth-nulth culture classes are needed not just for students but for staff, as well, to help bridge the gap between students, the community, and educators. Some other resources needed include:

- Release time will be needed to encourage staff to go to Tsaxana and host informal parent-teacher nights.
- Funding to host a fall and spring community activity hosted by the school.
- Release time and funding to encourage more school field trips and land based learning.
- Release time to make sure that parent contacts, both phone and email, are correct.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing Goal

Goal Statement:

Increase the number staff and students who are comfortable with, engaged with and learning about Nuu-chah-nulth culture.

Priority Alignment

Supporting Strategic Plan Goal:

Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Developing strong connections between schools and local communities.

Why was this goal chosen?

A school should respect and express the values, as well as the local Indigenous culture and language, of the land on which it is situated. Jo Chrona speaks to this in the opening pages of her book Wayi Wah!:

“One important aspect of Indigenous knowledge systems is that they respond to, and honour, context. Who I am, where I write from, and the land I am now on informs what I share with you. Knowledge and understanding are entrenched in relationship and connected to people and place.”

Further, provincial mandates, as well as the new BC curriculum, require that Indigenous ways of knowing be reflected in all classes and within the school culture as whole.

Pathways interviews from last year outline the divide between our Indigenous and non-Indigenous population. Some students actively participating, interested in, and engaging with Nuu-chah-nulth culture while other students wanting to participate. Conversations with parents at PAC meetings and anecdotal reports from staff suggest there is still some discomfort as well as a lack of understanding amongst the non-Indigenous families for the emphasis on Indigenous culture.

60% of our local students identify as Indigenous, and Indigenous students are over-represented among our students with chronic attendance issues. Pathways interviews in addition to school surveys consistently show that engaging in culture at school is important to Indigenous students.

Strategies to implement

To bring about respect for, interest in, and comfort with Nuu-chah-nulth culture, we are emphasizing two foundation points. Firstly, based on lived experience and on the results of pathways interviews where students who are resistant to learning Nuu-chah-nulth language and culture point out that one of the reasons for this resistance is feeling it is being forced upon them. We are taking the attitude that, when seeking to increase the comfort level and engagement with Nuu-chah-nulth language and culture among the staff and students, we need to go about in such a way that this increase is organic, viz a viz a natural outcome of our approach and strategies, and is not something that is compelled or forced from above. This brings about the second point: As we pursue the goal of increasing comfort and engagement with Nuu-chah-nulth language and culture amongst students and staff, it is important to recognize and celebrate all cultures represented at GRSS. With all of this in mind, we are looking at the following strategies:

- Start with foundational concepts in Nuu-chah-nulth like **?iisaak** (respect) and **hišuk?iš c'awaak** (everything is one) to emphasize core values and celebrate the fact that we are all connected, within and amongst ourselves, and with nature.
- Celebrate the cultural diversity of GRSS with varied “culture” days and weeks.
- We will integrate Nuu-chah-nulth language into daily classroom routines (eg. Greetings, common phrases, signage, announcements).
- We will expand our capacity to teach Nuu-chah-nulth language by posting for a Nuu-chah-nulth language teacher. This will allow us to offer more blocks and a more robust language program.
- We will seek out more local land-based learning approaches by engaging with the Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nation.
- Nuu-chah-nulth language and culture implementation will be a standing item on our staff meeting agendas.
- We will provide regular opportunities for students to learn about and practice Nuu-chah-nulth language through lessons, activities, and cultural events.
- We will continue to connect with RWES around culture practices, activities and events.
- Strengthen relationships with families and the broader NCN community through regular communication, community interaction events held in Tsaxana and effort to meet families directly. We will, throughout the year, go door-to-door in our two communities in order to engage and connect with parents.

Measures of Success

We will be looking primarily to the responses on Pathways interviews, specifically showing more interest in and engagement with Nuuchahnulth language and culture from a broader cross section of our students. We will also be looking at:

- Nuuchahnulth culture language present visually throughout the building and in classrooms.
- Discussions and feedback from PAC and community members.
- Less perceived divide between “groups” at school socially.
- Increased number of students enrolling in Nuuchahnulth language classes.

Resources Required

Most importantly -- classroom teachers more experienced and comfortable with NCN language—or extra support from district or band staff to support classroom teachers. In addition:

- Nuuchahnulth language resources.
- Portion of the school budget allocated for cultural activities as well as athletics and extra curriculars.
- Elder in residence or increased presence of community elders at GRSS.

Engagement

There are two primary categories for engagement—the first, already transpired, consists of how and from whom we sought input into the plan.

For the creation of this plan, we gathered feedback and input from students, staff, parents and community. For student feedback we relied on Pathways interviews and other surveys and conversations throughout the year. For staff we had regular check-ins at staff meetings and gave staff the opportunity to share feedback individually via survey. For parents and community, we held two parent engagement nights with one being held in Gold River and another in Tsaxana. During which, we presented the district strategic plan, communicated its goals and solicited feedback directly through conversation, and also through online surveys. Our PAC was also consulted during this process and at our May PAC meeting expressed strong support for the goals contained in this document.

The second portion around engagement concerns follow up. For example, the plan for keeping parties, who participated in the consultation process, involved in its implementation and informed of its progress. For this we will continue to regularly seek feedback from students via survey and conversations. We will also regularly reflect on our various data throughout the year: attendance, literacy, report card marks, and so on. For staff, we will have regular check-ins at staff meetings, reflecting on the different parts of the plan, how we're doing, and how we can improve. For community we will continue, or perhaps increase, the number of community engagement activities we host and, over a meal, share updates and solicit feedback around what is happening and how it is going relative to the plan.